000 order that the message of the Gospel may be presented in such a way as will appeal to those aspirations after the truth which reveal themselves in the religion and social rites of the Natives. How superior is this conception to that of former times, when heathenism was looked on as a creation of the devil through and through! We see better now that, amidst darkness and sin, the heathen mind is often seeking light and righteousness, and that these rays of truth, these presentiments of a higher life, must be infinitely respected and utilised in the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For instance, see how seriously savages keep their taboo!... This taboo—as we shall see—is inspired by strange, unscientific physiological ideas regarding defilement and contagion, which will disappear when scientific knowledge has spread amongst them. But let these ideas be somewhat amended, let the Natives understand that what is taboo is not physical uncleanness but moral evil, and their strong aversion to the act tabooed may become a powerful moral impulse for good.

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128 Here is the plan which I mean to adopt. After having briefly
121 explained in a preliminary chapter what the Thonga tribe is, I shall take an individual and follow him in his career from birth to death; the story of the evolution of a man and of a woman will constitute the first part of the book.

Then I shall pass on to the first social organism formed by these individuals, and study the life of the family and of the village, which is but an enlarged family.

The villages make up the clan and the tribe. The national life will constitute my third part, where I shall deal especially with the Chief, the Court and the Army.

Agricultural and industrial life and literary and artistic life will then be studied (as collective manifestations of the life of the tribe) and last but not least, I shall devote a considerable amount of time to the religious life and superstitions, trying to penetrate into the soul of the tribe, and to understand the manifold manifestations of its psychic life, which have always had a special interest for me.

128 It would have been safer for me to write this new and enlarged edition of *Les Ba-Ronga* in French, my native tongue. I decided to attempt it in English, as the public interested in South African affairs

128 is essentially an English-speaking public and as a great portion of the Thonga tribe is settled in British Territory. I know that I can rely on the indulgence of the English public... When my readers notice that the book has been written by a foreigner—I am afraid they will often make that observation—I beg them kindly to remember that, for me, it would have been much more agreeable to write it in French...

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121 To work for Science is noble ; but to help our fellow men is nobler still.

In the difficult undertaking which lies before me, I shall feel immensely gratified if scientists find useful material for their studies amongst my observations. Anthropologists try to throw some light on the dark problem of the origin of the psychic life in mankind; may the picture of a South African primitive tribe bring them some valuable information. But I should feel even deeper satisfaction if my work could help my South African brethren, and contribute to the peaceful solution of our great practical problem there, the Native problem. White men soon tire of the Native when they only see the badly brought up youths who walk about the streets of our colonial towns. They despise them, find them "cheeky" and very soon come to the conclusion : "Natives are no good !" Who can deny that this attitude, adopted by so many South Africans, is as dangerous for the peace of the country as are the very defects with which they reproach the Natives, and which often come from contact with a depraved and unscupulous civilisation ? Let those who are prejudiced against the black race study more carefully its customs, its mind, such as it reveals itself in the old rites of the Bantu tribes. They will see that these Natives are much more earnest than they thought and that in them beats a true human heart. If, in their ignorance of true morality and of true religion, they have submitted themselves willingly to the sufferings of initiation, to the painful rites of purification, in order to reach what they thought to be a higher level of human righteousness, are we not entitled to hope that we shall be able to build up true character in them when we bring them under the moralising influence of Christianity, and teach them to understand the religion which has saved the world ?

Should I succeed in eliciting new and more enlightened sympathy

121 amongst the Whites for our Native brethren, should this book prevent the gulf which separates the races from becoming wider, I think it will have been worth while writing it.

May I be allowed one final comment ? Colossal changes are now taking place amongst the South African tribes. Civilisation has taken fast hold not only of the coast but of the interior. It has exercised a marvellous influence on the High Velt of Johannesburg and is spreading to the borders of the desert. Amongst those races so long stagnant, an evolution has started which is proceeding with great rapidity and a kind of fatality. What will be its ultimate result ? The ethnographer does not generally trouble himself with such questions. It is enough for him to note the facts carefully and to describe them accurately. I aim at being a faithful and impartial ethnographer in the study of customs which still exist but will soon have passed away, but I cannot forget that I am also a Missionary. I belong to that body of men who, with Native Commissioners and liberal minded Colonists, feel they have a sacred duty to perform towards the weaker race. In this most tempting basket of varied fruits which civilisation offers to the Native, we feel we must guide his inexperienced hand, pointing out to him those which conduce to his happiness and progress and those which are poisonous and might be fatal to him. This book is addressed to those who can influence this evolution, be they the Authorities puzzled by the Native problem, or be they educated Natives who 121 are perplexed regarding the future of their race. I will endeavour to 128 indicate the lines along which it appears to me we ought to direct the tribe in order that it may escape shame and destruction. But these suggestions will be given at the end of the volume, in special paragraphs, carefully separated from the scientific treatise. I have enough respect for science to avoid mixing the two subjects. On the other hand, I trust those of my readers who do not share my religious faith or my philanthropic hopes will not blame me for here touching upon the important problems of Native policy. Science has never opposed the betterment and ennoblement of humanity ! If this book can in the slightest degree help towards this end, such help will be its best and most precious justification.

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128 Since the first edition was published, I have spent seven years more in Rikatla and gathered a considerable amount of new information,

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

128 especially about the kinship system, hunting rites and ancestor worship. I intend to introduce this new material in the present second edition. I had also the opportunity of sojourning in Besutoland and amongst the Ba-Venda of the Northern Transvaal, and of collecting data which are valuable for a comparison of the customs of the various Bantu tribes of South Africa. I shall refer to these occasionally, without however abandoning my original plan, which is the description of the Thonga tribe.

Geneva, June 1926. Henri A. Junod.